



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Flattery Rocks, Copalis, and Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuges

May 2005 - Planning Update 3

We Are Back!

This is the third update to keep you informed about and involved with the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Washington Islands National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). Thank you for your patience since the last planning update (March 2001).

In the last update, we listed the main issues that were identified in written and verbal comments, including: wildlife disturbance by low-flying aircraft and nearshore boating; oil spill readiness and existing contaminants; agency coordination; and research opportunities.

Double-crested cormorant. Photo USFWS.



In this update:

What are the alternatives.	2
Stupendous Steller sea lion.	2
We welcome your comments . . .	2
Summary of the alternatives. . . .	3
Planning schedule.	4
What's next	4



Steller sea lions hauled out at Copalis Refuge. Photo USFWS.

The Draft CCP Is Ready For Review

Since March 2001, we have worked on developing the CCP in cooperation with other Federal and State agencies, and Native American Tribes. Although this process took some time, these relationships are important to the conservation of the area's natural resources.

Since establishment of Flattery Rocks, Copalis, and Quillayute Needles NWRs in 1907, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has acted as caretaker for these important seabird and marine mammal breeding areas. Now, more than ever, we realize the importance of protecting these mostly pristine habitats and the species dependent on them.

Today, we face increased risks from invasive species, oil spills, contamination, and human disturbance. The Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) identifies strategies to combat these risks and increase public appreciation for these truly unique wildlife areas.

We would like to thank everyone for providing their knowledge and insight into this process to date. The Draft CCP and EA is now available for your review and comment. The deadline for comments is June 30, 2005.

What Are the Alternatives?

In the Draft CCP/EA, two alternatives are described and compared for the Washington Islands NWRs. Alternative A is the No Action Alternative. Selecting this alternative would result in refuge management continuing as it has over the past several years.

Alternative B is the Proposed Action and addresses the issues identified in the planning process. It would result in the implementation of the management strategies called for in the Draft CCP/EA. The need for increased coordination is reflected in many of the proposed goals, objectives, and strategies, of the Draft CCP/EA. Increasing coordination with other Federal and State agencies, Tribes, and partners, would enhance protection of the natural and cultural resources of these Refuges and the Pacific Coast.

Stupendous Steller Sea Lion!

The Washington Island NWRs provide protected haul-out habitat for the State's Steller sea lion population. The Steller sea lion is a federally threatened species. Threats to the Stellers include oil spills, prey decline, fishery entrapment, and disturbance at haul-outs.

The Steller sea lion differs from the California sea lion in size, with the average male Steller weighing about



Male Steller sea lion.

1,500 pounds compared to the California sea lion at 800 pounds. Stellers are also lighter in color, and do not bark, but aggressively growl and roar.

Like other seals, Steller sea lions have adapted to living part of their life on shore where they breed, rest, and nurse their young. They have long annual migrations. The majority of Stellers breed in Alaska and can be seen in Washington State from fall through spring.

We Welcome Your Review and Comments

You may review or request a copy of the Draft CCP/EA at:

Washington Maritime NWR Complex
33 S. Barr Road
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(360) 457-8451 (360) 457-9778 Fax

Or online at: <http://pacific.fws.gov/planning>

Printed documents are also available for review at the following libraries:

Aberdeen Library, Hoquiam Timberland Library, Jefferson County Library, Montesano Timberland Library, North Olympic Library (in Clallam Bay, Port Angeles, Forks, and Sequim), Ocean Shores Library, Westport Timberland Library, and Seattle Public Library.

Comments on the Draft CCP/EA should be addressed to:

Kevin Ryan, Refuge Manager
Washington Maritime NWR Complex
33 S. Barr Road
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(360) 457-8451 (360) 457-9778 Fax

Or via e-mail to:

FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov

Please use WA Islands Refuges in the subject.

*Please submit
comments by
June 30, 2005*

Summary of the Alternatives

Issues	No Action Alternative	Actions Proposed Under the Preferred Alternative
Contaminants	<p>Current level of protection against oil spills would not change.</p> <p>Contaminants and debris on Destruction Island and other islands may continue.</p>	<p>Enhance oil spill readiness efforts.</p> <p>Facilitate contaminant clean-up on Destruction Island and other islands.</p>
Invasive Species Management	<p>Information available on presence of invasive species would remain limited.</p>	<p>Initiate invasive species management strategies, such as removal of European rabbits on Destruction Island.</p>
Disturbance	<p>A 200-yard boat-free zone would not be established.</p> <p>Cooperative agreements with the National Park Service to enforce trespassing would continue.</p>	<p>Increase efforts to establish a 200-yard boat-free zone and a 2,000-foot minimum flight altitude around islands.</p> <p>Reduce trespassing events by enhancing cooperation with the National Park Service and Tribes.</p>
Interagency and Tribal Coordination	<p>Current coordination and cooperation levels would remain in place.</p> <p>Memorandums of Understanding currently exist with the National Park Service and U.S. Coast Guard.</p> <p>Communication and coordination is limited.</p>	<p>Seek increased agency cooperation to implement oil spill preparation measures.</p> <p>Develop cooperative plans to clean-up pollution and debris left by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Navy.</p> <p>Develop Memorandums of Understanding with Tribes to better address Refuge management with respect to Treaties, relevant Federal laws, and the Service's Native American Policy.</p> <p>Provide annual activity updates to increase coordination and cooperation.</p>
Monitoring and Research	<p>Current long-term monitoring and applied scientific research levels would continue.</p>	<p>Participate in a regional seabird plan to guide Refuge activities toward seabird conservation.</p> <p>Encourage compatible research and long-term monitoring to enhance Refuge management.</p> <p>Develop library and spatial data (GIS) that would effectively increase resource management.</p>
Public Awareness of the Refuges and Wildlife Resources	<p>Off-site interpretation would remain limited to a few highway panels.</p>	<p>Develop a contact station with interpretive exhibits and a resource library at proposed new headquarters.</p> <p>Develop a website to provide public information on breeding seabirds and marine mammals.</p> <p>Seek funding for a staff position to implement an off-site education program to include boating and aircraft impact awareness.</p>

The Planning Schedule

Planning Update 1.....Completed
Mail-In Response Form Due.....Completed
Second Planning Update..... Completed
Third Planning Update..... Completed
Public Review of Draft CCP/EA..... Spring 2005
Fourth and Final Planning Update..... Summer 2005
Final CCP and Notice of Decision. Summer 2005

What's Next?

The Draft CCP/EA is now available for public review and comment. This is your opportunity to provide input into the management of the Refuges over the next 15 years. A fourth planning update is scheduled for this summer. It will provide information on the Final CCP.

After the review and comment period ends for this Draft CCP/EA, comments will be analyzed by the Service and addressed in revised planning documents.

Thank you for your help!



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington Maritime NWR Complex
33 S. Barr Road
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Address correction requested